

## **“Military Child Care Protection Act of 2016” (Senators Burr and Boxer)**

**Background:** Child care is a necessity for the families of our servicemen and women. When a parent serving our nation leaves his or her loved one in the care of an on- or off-base military child care center they rightly expect that child to be safe and not in the hands of someone with a criminal background.

And yet we are continually reminded of the false sense of security these parents have when that trust is broken by workers serving our military families. In 2012 several workers were [arrested](#) at the Fort Myer Child Development Center (CDC) for [multiple](#) instances of child abuse by individuals with criminal histories. In 2013, the FBI reportedly [investigated](#) sexual abuse at Ft. Meade. [Inconsistencies](#) – that, to date, still exist – in how civilian child care and military background checks are conducted led to the death of 4 month old “Sonny” Degenhard in 2012 at Ft. Bragg.

Given the dramatic [increase](#) in military families with child care needs, the DoD now runs the largest employer-sponsored child care system in the nation. It is Congress’ responsibility to ensure this system is held accountable for who is hired with federal taxpayer dollars and military children are safe. Since passage of the Military Child Care Act of 1989, military care has led the way in high standards for the care of military loved ones, but tragic recent events call into question whether that is still the case.

The 113<sup>th</sup> Congress passed the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 putting into law the highest standards for criminal background checks of employers receiving federal child care dollars. While DoD began the process in October 2014 of updating their criminal background check requirements, to date their efforts do not carry the same high standards as those under CCDBG of 2014, potentially leaving children vulnerable.

**The Solution:** The Military Child Care Protection Act would place the same requirements on military child care facilities to carry out criminal background checks as those required under CCDBG Act of 2014. In addition to creating consistency with the same high standards expected in civilian child care, it is essential to ensuring the safety of military children.

For background, CCDBG of 2014 requires individuals having been convicted of the following offenses be barred from working with children in federal child care settings:

- murder;
- child abuse or neglect;
- crimes against children, such as child pornography,
- spousal abuse;
- rape or sexual assault;
- kidnapping, arson, physical assault or battery; and
- drug related offense committed during the preceding five years.

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